UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Washington 25, D. C.

To: Regional Foresters & Directors (Also AL & TR) **File No.** 1020

From: Clint Davis, Director, Division of I&E **Date:** August 15, 1960

Subject: Laws, Regulations, and Orders

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Attached for your information and use is background material on the National Grasslands. The National Grasslands were designated a part of the national-forest system by Administrative Order on June 20, 1960, signed by Acting Secretary of Agriculture Morse.

We are sending sufficient copies for distribution to rangers and research center leaders. Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 are being sent bulk supplies for distribution to interested cooperators and for use by public information media. This material can supplement good locally prepared material on specific National Grasslands. As a further effort to inform people about them, this office is beginning to prepare a more comprehensive, illustrated booklet on the National Grasslands which we expect to be available within a year. We are also considering the production of a film on the National Grasslands.

Assistant Secretary Peterson regards the order designating the National Grasslands and providing for their permanent management as another big step in the conservation of our vital natural resources. It assures that this large area of public land will now have firm direction and will be managed so that its several resources are taken care of and utilized in the best public interest.

In other ways, too, this order is important to the Forest Service, and each Forest officer should become familiar with the order (FSM 1024) and the attached background information.

We in the Forest Service can be proud of the national and local acceptance this national grassland action has found. In particular, field officers who have worked with the local users are to be commended for the manner in which users from Texas to North Dakota have accepted and endorsed the administration of the lands by the Forest Service.

Clint Davis

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THE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

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United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

THE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS*

On June 20, 1960 Acting Secretary of Agriculture True D. Morse issued an Administrative order designating 22 land utilization projects as National Grasslands (FR 6-24-60 p. 5845).

"The conversion of these projects to National Grasslands is another big step in the conservation of our vital natural resources," said Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Ervin L. Peterson. "It assures that this large area of public land will now have firm direction and will be managed so that its several resources are taken care of and utilized in the best public interest. Thus, the lands will continue to contribute to the national as well as the local economy and welfare."

The National Grasslands are permanently held by the Department of Agriculture as a part of the national-forest system for administration under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. They comprise 3,822,000 acres in portions of eleven Great Plains and western States which are representative of areas predominately suited to grassland agriculture. They are administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes under multiple-use and sustained-yield management. (See page 7 for location and management headquarters. A map showing the areas is on page 8).

From Dust Bowl to Grasslands

Encouraged by local people, the Federal Government purchased these lands as a part of a program of land utilization and land use adjustment. The program began in the 1930's as an emergency measure and continued under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937. The lands were in farms which because of poor soil, drought, or other factors were incapable of yielding the owners a stable livelihood, or grasslands which were depleted and in many cases eroding. Much of the land had degenerated into dust bowls.

The unique venture of buying this land and restoring the eroding and depleted lands to grass provided new opportunities for thousands of families stranded on the lands. And by major changes in land use from poor and uncertain crop production to stabilized grass production, a basis was formed for a healthy livestock economy for many communities.

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*Background information issued by the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, July 25, 1960

Fortunately, all of the lands purchased had not been plowed and some of them had not been in cultivation for many years. Sufficient remnants of native grasses remained and many fields returned naturally to grass. Other areas, however, were subject to active wind and water erosion. There, soil stabilization was slow and erosion occurred faster than revegetation. These areas had to be artificially reseeded.

Through the cooperation of the local people with their Government, these lands have been protected and in a large measure revegetated. Water facilities have been installed, and pastures have been fenced for management purposes. The successful restoration of depleted lands has re-established a game and bird habitat and so has fostered the growth of resident bird and animal populations. The restored lands form protected watersheds which act to resist wind erosion, prevent the silting of downstream reservoirs and aid the on site use of the rainfall.

Management and Development

The renewable resources are developed and administered to the fullest extent practicable for multiple use and sustained yield. Under multiple-use management, the various resources are utilized in the combinations that will best meet the needs of the American people. Harmonious and coordinated management of all the various resources each with the other without impairment of the productivity of the land is sought. Consideration is given to the relative value of the various resources and not necessarily to the combination of use that will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest unit output.

As a correlary to multiple-use management, the lands are managed for sustained yield so as to achieve and maintain for the future a high level production of the renewable resources and services.

The resources -- outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish -- are managed and developed so as to maintain and improve the soil and vegetation cover and to promote the development of grassland agriculture in the areas of which the national grasslands are a part. In addition, they are protected from enemies such as fire, insects and disease. The resources of each area, the condition of the land, and the treatments needed are considered in determining the current and long-term program of grassland management and development in each area. The regulations which govern the national forests are applicable to the National Grasslands.

Grazing Management

Use of the National Grasslands for grazing over 165,000 cattle and 47,000 sheep annually must of necessity be integrated with the use of intermingled other lands. By agreement the local people, who control the other lands and who for the most part are also users of the Government lands, have accepted a large measure of responsibility in managing livestock on many of the areas. These agreements provide an effective means of accomplishing livestock management and of assuring that the lands contribute to a soundly-based grassland agriculture. The local users frequently are organized into grazing associations to accomplish many of the conservation objectives. Their participation in the management also contributes to security of tenure essential to sound livestock farming or ranching.

Grazing use is by permit or leases issued by on-the-ground Forest Service land managers. They are issued either to local grazing associations, which in turn distribute grazing privileges among members, or directly to individual ranchers. Fees are paid on the basis of each animal month of grazing permitted. This cooperative approach has resulted in good progress in the revegetation of the land, installation of water improvements, and fencing of units for management so as to allow the harvesting of such forage for domestic livestock as is consistent with the long-term program of management. Progress in this regard should now be hastened.

Wildlife Habitat Management

The National Grasslands furnish food, cover, and water for a wide variety of wildlife and fish. An estimated 27,000 antelope and 19,000 deer live all or a portion of the year on the areas. Here, also, are found quail, prairie chickens, sharp-tail grouse, pheasants, and other game and song birds.

The State Fish and Game Agencies are responsible for managing and protecting the wildlife and regulating hunting and fishing. The Forest Service is responsible for managing, developing, and protecting the wildlife habitat in harmony with other resource uses. Opportunities for wildlife habitat development vary among the individual grassland units. However, under multiple-use management and coordinated measures, action is taken to protect and enhance the many wildlife values. In addition, State agencies are encouraged to join in and develop food and cover plots, water facilities for wildlife, small impoundments for fishing, access roads for game harvest, browse planting, and many other similar projects. Thus the potential of these lands for production of wildlife and fish can be enhanced.

Watershed Management and Soil Stabilization

The proper management and use of the National Grasslands is a part of the big job of conserving and improving the nation's water resources and keeping soil in place. Generally, they are located in areas of unstable soil and deficient rainfall. Thus, a delicate balance of soil and water prevails which is easily disrupted by cultivation, too heavy grazing, or other intensive land use. Stable, conservation-wise management is essential to assure permanent protection of the land. A good vegetative cover must be retained to keep runoff at a minimum, reduce wind and water erosion, and enhance the water storage capacity of the land. Watershed rehabilitation measures have been applied to stabilize gullies and channels, control sheet erosion, stabilize dunes, control erosion on roads and trails and accomplish water spreading; much work of this kind remains to be accomplished.

Woodland Management

Small areas of the National Grasslands support some tree growth of a woodland type and where these areas occur they generally have high esthetic or recreational value. Woodland management, consistent with these values, to produce wood products needed in the local communities is carried out. Woodland products where available are generally sold on the stump to the highest qualified bidder.

Recreation

Over 300,000 visits are made annually to the National Grasslands for hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking and other recreation use. All of these pursuits are increasing. Visits to the areas are usually of a short duration and facilities needed to accommodate the public are mostly confined to picnic and campsites in connection with the hunting and fishing. Outdoor recreation will increase as the public becomes aware that the grasslands are open to extensive public use. More facilities will be needed to accommodate this use and to develop the recreational potential.

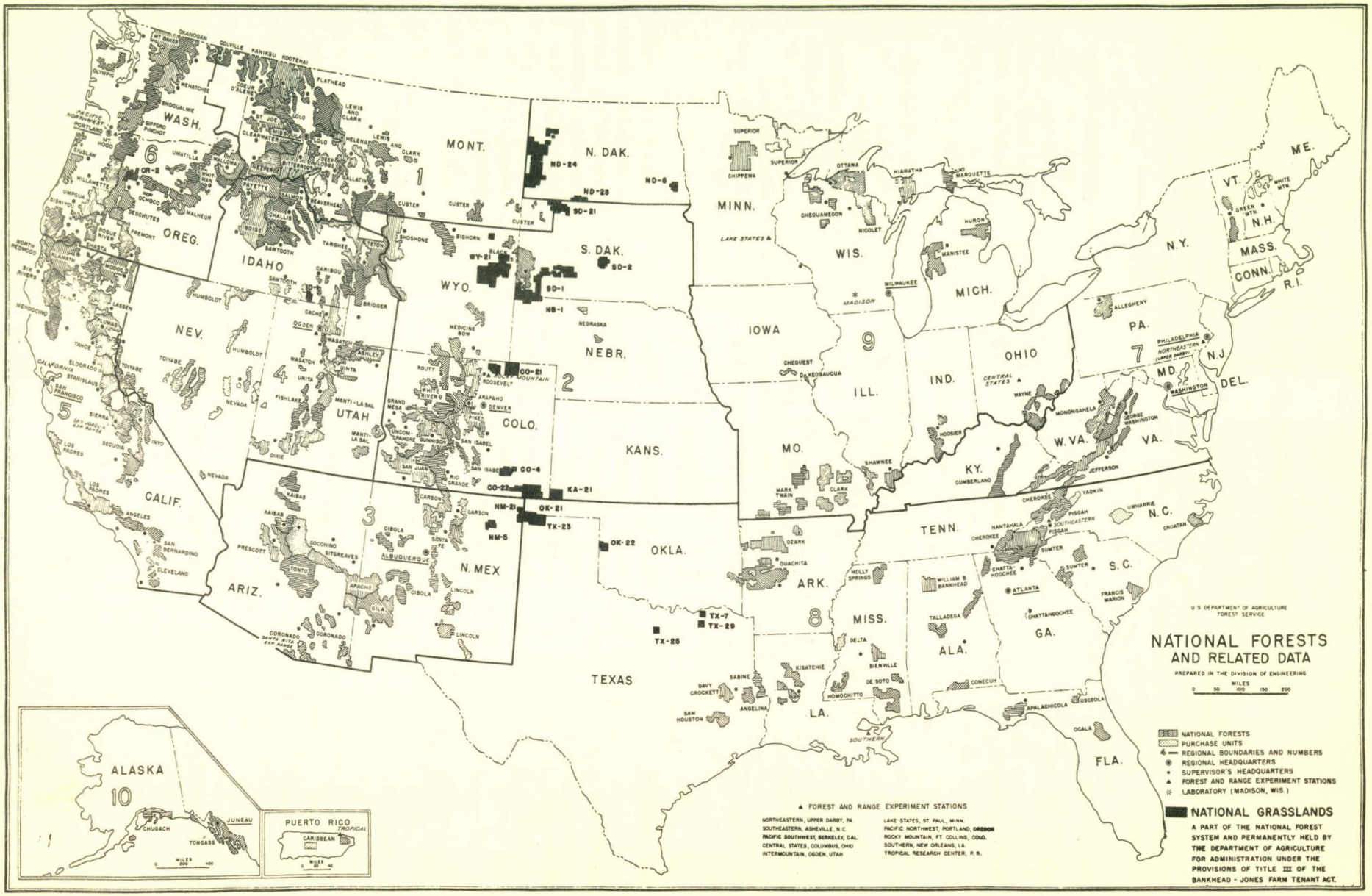
Overall Conservation

The National Grasslands contribute to the nation's effort to conserve water and protect watersheds. They demonstrate the practicability of grassland management and development needed to keep unstable soils in place and covered with grass. This enhances the local watersheds, helps control wind erosion, prevents the silting of downstream reservoirs and other water facilities and provides forage for a soundly-based grassland agriculture and livestock economy in portions of eleven States. These lands also provide large areas open to public use for hunting, fishing, picnicking, camping, and other recreation.

LOCATION AND MANAGEMENT HEADQUARTERS

(Listed below in the Forest Service Region having administrative responsibility, although project may not be located within established regional boundary)

Location	Region 1	Headquarters
North Dakota	Cedar, ND-25	Billings, Mont.
	Western North Dakota, ND-24	Billings, Mont.
South Dakota	Perkins-Corson, SD-21	Billings, Mont.
	Region 2	
Colorado	Northeast Colorado, CO-21	Fort Collins
	Southeastern Colorado, CO-22	Pueblo
	Southern Otero, CO-4	Pueblo
Kansas	Morton County, KA-21	Pueblo, Colo.
Nebraska	Pine Ridge, NB-1	Lincoln
South Dakota	Bad Lands-Fall River SD-1	Custer
	South Central South Dakota, SD-2	Custer
Wyoming	Northeastern Wyoming, WY-21	Laramie
	Region 3	
New Mexico	Mills, NM-5	Amarillo, Texas
	Union County, NM-21	Amarillo, Texas
Oklahoma	Cimarron, OK-21	Amarillo, Texas
	Roger Mills, OK-22	Amarillo, Texas
Texas	Cross Timbers, TX-25	Amarillo
	Dallam County, TX-23	Amarillo
	Ladonia, TX-29	Amarillo
	Northeast Texas, TX-7	Amarillo
	Region 4	
Idaho	Southeastern Idaho, ID-1	Pocatello
	Region 6	
Oregon	Central Oregon, OR-2	Prineville
	Region 9	
North Dakota	Sheyenne River, ND-6	Cass Lake, Minn.


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
NATIONAL FORESTS
AND RELATED DATA
PREPARED IN THE DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
MILES
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NATIONAL FORESTS
PURCHASE UNITS
REGIONAL BOUNDARIES AND NUMBERS
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPERVISOR'S HEADQUARTERS
FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATIONS
LABORATORY (MADISON, WIS.)
NATIONAL GRASSLANDS
A PART OF THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM AND PERMANENTLY HELD BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE III OF THE BANKHEAD - JONES FARM TENANT ACT.
▲ FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATIONS
NORTHEASTERN, UPPER DARBY, PA
SOUTHEASTERN, ASHEVILLE, N.C.
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST, BERKELEY, CAL.
CENTRAL STATES, COLUMBUS, OHIO
INTERMOUNTAIN, OGDEN, UTAH
LAKE STATES, ST. PAUL, MINN.
PACIFIC NORTHWEST, PORTLAND, OREGON
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